

# CHINA'S TORTUOUS ROAD

CHOU EN-LAI in his report to the much-postponed and almost secret tenth Party Congress finished with a fine poetic quotation from - who else but - Chairman Mao: "The future is bright, the road is tortuous".

As to the bright future. President Pompidou is on his way to China (Humanite's correspondent has been refused a visa for the visit); Chou has denounced Russia's imperialism and warned the West against her; there is reported loose talk of a pre-emptive strike by China; Lin Piao, Mao's former confidant and seeming successor has been expunged from the records, the Conference of Unaligned Nations will be a little more aligned with Russia than with China; there are twenty-eight million party members out of six hundred million population (still a minority!); the recent army coup in Afghanistan is thought of as a Soviet threat to Mongolia; there is a possibility that the National People's Con-

gress may meet again soon (it has not met since 1964); the disbanded (since the Cultural Revolution) Youth League may be reconstructed and hold a national congress; trade is building up in iron ore from Australia, possibly butter from the E.E.C., mining and technical colour equipment (for a bright future?) from Britain, and China is interested in oil prospecting in the East China Sea; meanwhile China may be able to compare notes with President Pompidou on her bomb test and will doubtless enjoy her United Nations status. The future seems brighter than a thousand suns to quote somebody (not Chairman Mao) on the bomb.

A tortuous road it certainly has been, or as it might more historically be put - a long march. But that event in China's history (which is the equivalent of an old school tie) was in itself tortuous since it was endured to avoid encounters with Chiang Kai Shek's Kuomintang

forces, and was followed shortly afterward by Moscow instructions to co-operate with the Kuomintang ... ..

The road of revolution in China has certainly been tortuous; it has keenly been watched by those who hoped, and still hope, for a social revolution which will restore the dignity and freedom of man. Many, betrayed and disappointed by the Soviet Union have placed their hopes and desires in China; but in many cases this is mere transference and the same betrayals and disappointments

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WE'VE PICKED THE USUAL LEMON

# THE DEAD WEIGHT OF THE STATE

YET ANOTHER TUC Congress is over and the bureaucrats and the delegates have departed and returned to their own respective organisations. These annual events at the seaside really achieve very little for the working class movement. Usually they show up the differences of opinion and interest which exist between the unions. Such a situation will exist as long as the trade unions continue to work within the framework of the capitalist system. Each trade union tries to get as much for its members within certain limitations that will not force them into actual conflict with the government's economic policies. Occasionally conflicts do take place, as with the miners last year, but these are very much the exception to the rule.

Because of the conflict of interest at the point of production, confrontations do take place. These are usually resolved by direct action by the workers themselves without the help of the official trade unions.

Instead of showing a united movement of workers, the trade unions create divisions and antagonism between themselves. The moderates versus the left-wingers is mainly promoted by the press to highlight the so-called victories of the former. But whichever resolution is finally carried at Congress, it will need action from the membership to make the show of hands successful. The TUC are now committed to organise such action in support of higher old age pensions. Such action is long overdue, but the trade unions and their members have for too long been concerned solely with their own narrow interests. It is the widening of these interests that should separate the working class from those who benefit from the present system of exploitation. However the trade unions in this country have always played the role described by Frederick Rogers, leader of the Bookbinders union in 1894. He said: "We shall enlarge the frontiers of the State and control, so far as a Government can control,

the power of the capitalist over the labourer more and more. But there must be an independent life within the State to prevent Government becoming tyranny, and the trade unions will be chief among those who shall call that independent life into being."

The trade union leaders have always sought the aid of the State for the amelioration of conditions for their members, but their independence has been threatened in recent years. The successful opposition to the Labour Government's "In Place of Strife" did not prevent the Tories bringing in similar legislation. The trade union leadership feel safer when they are seeking political reforms via Parliament than when they are leading their members into action. When they do, they are always apologetic and defensive about the action their members are taking. Like management, they fear the rank and file. They would rather achieve their objectives

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# WHO WON IN VIETNAM ?

NOW THAT the war in Vietnam has officially ended the fate of the Vietnamese people has ceased to concern the majority of the newspapers. The Americans - and their erstwhile President, Nixon, have other worries.

The Left have ceased their agonizing postures about National Liberation but the problems of the people in Vietnam remain. The fickle press rarely gives us news of Vietnam but the Times on August 30th had a story from its correspondent Victoria Brittain in Saigon which aptly illustrates the veracity of the anarchist position.

Headed with a 'strap' "Saigon's influence in countryside wains as peasants move to communist areas" followed by the main headline "Vietnam farmers exploiting empty land" it says:

"As a result of the diminished fighting since the ceasefire and of the growing economic crisis, South Vietnamese peasants are beginning to cultivate uninhabited land in insecure areas at least semi-controlled by the communist Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG)"

Victoria Brittain writes of four peasants 140 miles north of Saigon planning to take over forest areas and a tea-plantation on behalf of 2,000 people, most of whom were woodmen, working in Communist-held forests. President Thieu a month ago announced an 'economic blockade of communist-held areas' and the communists have demanded that their customary tax of £1.75 for each cubic metre of wood taken from the forest now be paid in rice.

From the ceasefire until now the tax had been paid half in rice and half in cash. The Thieu government have forbidden the peasants to carry with them more than a handful of rice. Batteries (obviously to prevent radio-listening), sugar and medicines are also forbidden. Anyone who wants to buy more rice than his family needs must ask permission from the province chief. This will obviously lead to a deterioration of relations with the local communists because of their demand for rice - which is short - and the troops are obviously determined to live off the country.

The peasant will also clash with the Thieu Government because they intend to build huts and stay overnight in the fields and not 'commute' from strategic hamlets assigned to them. Abandoned land is being turned over to re-cultivation but the peasants complain of having to return to the hamlets.

Victoria Brittain says "The farmers of these provinces /near Saigon and Phuoc Tuy/ 100 miles apart illustrate President Thieu's political vulnerability in the countryside. For the country's economy he needs to encourage the peasants to work as much new land as possible, but politically he cannot afford to let them range far into the fallow areas of the countryside as this exposes them to communist influence."

We have been chided by former comrades for not choosing sides in Vietnam and thus leaving the peasant to his serfdom. We now see that, despite a 'victory' for the N.L.F., 'his liberators', the peasant is still between two mill-stones.

J.R.

## IN BRIEF

The London Dwarfs have started an indoor pamphlets/books stall and 'info' centre - "The Moonfleet Truckers" - on communes, eco-action, etc. They will also be handling craft goods at Stall No. 5 253 Portobello Road on Fridays and Saturdays.

Scientists have issued a writ against the Metropolitan police commissioner alleging libel in a confidential Interpol document and leaked to the German magazine Neue Revue which published it in July. They are also suing other police heads. Scientology stated that "Supra-national police should be under some governmental control - otherwise, unknown to the citizen, there is

a secret police holding secret and possibly false data on law-abiding individuals and groups. Hitler's thought police come true." It has been alleged, falsely it is claimed by scientists, that they have been involved in robbery, forgery and threats against persons making public statements against scientology. The movement (formerly dianetics) had a recent letter published in the Observer giving the name of their periodical as "Freedom" rather than its correct title Freedom through Scientology. The Observer failed to publish a correction sent by FREEDOM editors.

The Industrial Worker (U.S.) had a list of current boycotts including one of British goods because of Britain's repression in Northern Ireland. Managers of a



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British grocery chain have denied boycotting Irish (Free State) Kerrygold butter but nevertheless the price has dropped by at least 2p a pound.

International Computers Ltd., subsidized by the British Government, has sold a £200,000 computer to South Africa's Bantu Administration and Development department for use in the maintenance of apartheid's pass system. Sancho Panza



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## ANGRY BRIGADE ECHOES

Dear Editors,

## LETTER

The letters from Rupert Williams, Nick Heath, and J.W. (September 8) illustrate the general rule that anarchists arguing with other anarchists should at least read what they actually write and avoid personal insults. If we can't argue sensibly among ourselves, how can we hope to appeal to other people?

When I said that Stuart Christie's letter in the Listener concerned 'revolutionary syndicalism, based on the class struggle and the organisation of the proletariat, rather than true anarchism, based on opposition to authority and the liberation of the people', I was not attacking Stuart or condemning syndicalism but simply describing the position taken by his letter.

Surely no one, least of all an anarchist or a syndicalist, seriously imagines that anarchism and syndicalism are the same. Of course they overlap, to a greater or lesser extent, but the two words mean different things. Many anarchists are syndicalists and many syndicalists are anarchists, but at the same time many anarchists are not syndicalists or even socialists and many syndicalists are not anarchists or even libertarians. Ignoring or obscuring this fact only confuses the issue.

Of course anarchism implies a struggle against the ruling class, and of course the anarchist movement and the labour movement have always been inter-related. But the class struggle is not the whole of anarchism, and the labour movement is not wholly anarchist, by any means. Some anarchists go so far as to believe that the class struggle is a mystification, and many revolutionaries involved in working-class activity -- including some who call themselves syndicalists -- are as much opposed to anarchism as they are to liberalism, if not more so. Indeed, as Nick Heath says, read Bakunin, Malatesta, Makhno, yes and ... Kropotkin! They were all well aware of this problem; and it had important consequences in the syndicalist movements of France, Russia, Italy, and Spain.

I do not deny the class struggle or oppose syndicalism, and I do not suggest that those I disagree with are not anarchists. I do insist that anarchism is more than a matter of class, and that it is those who try to confine it to such a definition who are distorting facts and risking double-think.

## REVIEWS

## ART

And for the Town and his frau it is Inside Whitechapel at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. The life of working class Whitechapel is told in dozens of photographs dating back over 70 years but it is a distorted version. In Doré's drawings of the selfsame London, Dore saw working class London as a place of dark and unrelieved misery and the Whitechapel exhibition offers us a version of a workers' playtime, and between lies the true picture and the true story, and I think it would be fitting if the newly-published book of Doré's London drawings were on display within the Whitechapel Gallery as a counterpoint to what is a very good though unintentionally distorted view of working class life.

But be that as it may there is William Turnbull at the Tate. Good, solid, uninspired and pedestrian echoing everything from Brancusi to Giacometti, Turnbull had his high water mark in the 1950's when Lawrence Alloway ran the art circus and every gallery was a minefield of painted angle iron but old age and the Tate have claimed Turnbull. Unfortunately for Turnbull it is the Kidsplay that has won the public attention at the Tate and Gingell, Setch and Weightman have been allowed to turn a small room of the Tate into an adult version of kiddy kulture to introduce teeny boppers to 'art-textural and tactile experience'. Arvid Bengtsson did an international survey on Adventure Playgrounds and the one thing that became apparent was that no matter what the country every Adventure Playground looked the same. All this day two small boys have been dragging and banging on an old iron bedstead outside my window and I do not believe that they would have wasted their time at the Tate's worthy attempt of Kidsplay or an Adventure Playground when the child's true adventure playground is the illegality of the streets and the crowded markets, for Kidsplay is strictly for adults admission one reluctant child meanwhile what of David?

Arthur Moyses

I similarly insist that on the evidence so far available to most of us, both positive and negative, the Angry Brigade was not anarchist, even if there were libertarian and syndicalist elements in its ideology. J.W. is wrong in suggesting that those on trial might have suffered from acknowledging anarchism -- after all, the only known anarchists among them were acquitted.

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# ANARCHISM & SYNDICALISM

NOTE: THIS ARTICLE BY MALATESTA IS Continued from last issue

It was written for FREEDOM in November, 1907; and where the word 'syndicalism' is used it is synonymous with trade unionism.

The interest of each one is to secure employment, and as a consequence one finds himself in antagonism - i.e., in competition - with the unemployed of one's country and the immigrants from other countries. Each one desires to keep or to secure the best place against workers in the same trade; it is the interest of each one to sell dear and buy cheap, and consequently as a producer he finds himself in conflict with all consumers, and again as consumer finds himself in conflict with all producers.

Union, agreement, the solidary struggle against the exploiters, --these things can only obtain today in so far as the workers, animated by the conception of a superior ideal, learn to sacrifice exclusive and personal interests to the common interest of all, the interests of the moment to the interests of the future; and this ideal of a society of solidarity, of justice, of brotherhood, can only be realised by the destruction, done in defiance of all legality, of existing institutions.

To offer to the workers this ideal; to put the broader interests of the future before those narrower and immediate; to render the adaptation to present conditions impossible; to work always for the propaganda and for action that will lead to and will accomplish the Revolution --these are the objects we as anarchists should strive for both in and out of the Unions.

Trade Unionism cannot do this, or can do but little of it; it has to reckon with present interests, and these interests are not always, alas! those of the Revolution. It must not too far exceed legal bounds, and it must at given moments treat with the masters and the authorities. It must concern itself with the interests of sections of the workers rather than the interests of the public, the interests of the unions rather than the interests of the mass of the workers and the unemployed. If it does not do this, it has no specific reason for existence; it would then only include the anarchists, or at most the socialists, and would so lose its principal utility, which is to educate and habituate to the struggle the masses that lag behind.

Besides, since the unions must remain open to all those who desire to win from the masters better conditions of life, whatever their opinions may be on the general constitution of society, they are naturally led to moderate their aspirations, first so that they should not frighten away those they wish to have with them, and next because, in proportion as numbers increase, those with ideas who have initiated the movement remain buried in a majority that is only occupied with the petty interests of the moment.

Thus one can see developing in all Unions, that have reached a certain position of influence, a tendency to assure, in accord with rather than against the masters, a privileged situation for new members, and for the admission of apprentices in the factories; a tendency to amass large funds that afterwards they are afraid of compromising; to seek the favour of public powers; to be absorbed, above all, in co-operation and mutual benefit schemes; and to become at last conservative elements in society.

After having stated this, it seems clear to me that the syndicalist movement cannot replace the anarchist movement, and that it can serve as a means of education and of revolutionary preparation only if it is acted on by the anarchistic impulse, action, and criticism.

Anarchists, then, ought to abstain from identifying themselves with the syndicalist movement, and to consider as an aim that which is but one of the means of propaganda and of action that they can utilise. They should remain in the syndicates as elements giving an onward impulse, and strive to make of them as much as possible instruments of combat in view of the Social Revolution. They should work to develop in the syndicates all that which can augment its educative influence and its combativeness -- the propaganda of ideas, the forcible strike, the spirit of proselytism, the distrust and hatred of the authorities and of the politicians, the practice of solidarity towards individuals and groups in conflict with the masters. They should combat all that which tends to render them egoistic, pacific, conservative -- professional pride and the narrow spirit of the corporate body, heavy contributions and the

accumulation of invested capital, the service of benefits and of assurance, confidence in the good offices of the State, good relationship with masters, the appointment of bureaucratic officials, paid and permanent.

On these conditions the participation of anarchists in the labour movement will have good results, but only on these conditions.

These tactics will sometimes appear to be, and even may really be, hurtful to the immediate interests of some groups; but that does not matter when it is a question of the anarchist cause -- that is to say, of the general and permanent interests of humanity. We certainly wish, while waiting for the Revolution, to wrest from Governments and from employers as much liberty and wellbeing as possible; but we would not compromise the future for some momentary advantages, which besides are often illusory or gained at the expense of other workers.

Let us beware of ourselves. The error of having abandoned the labour movement has done an immense injury to anarchism, but at least it leaves unaltered the distinctive character.

The error of confounding the anarchist movement with trade unionism would be still more grave. That will happen to us which happened to the Social Democrats as soon as they went into the Parliamentary struggle. They gained in numerical force, but by becoming each day less socialistic. We also would become more numerous, but we should cease to be anarchist.

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OLGA FREIDLIN-MAXIMOFF

On May 7th Olga Freidlin-Maximoff, widow of the well-known anarchist writer and militant Gregory Maximoff, who edited Bakunin's Political Philosophy, passed away in Chicago. Olga Freidlin was born in Smolensk near the close of the last century into a prosperous Jewish family which gave her an excellent education. The revolutionary storm which burst upon Russia early in the new century swept her up and deposited her in Ekaterinoslav, where she met Olga Taratuta who converted her to anarchism. Like Taratuta, young Olga was arrested and condemned to a long term of exile in Siberia. Liberated by the February Revolution of 1917, she came to Kharkov where she took an active part in the anarchist movement. Soon afterwards she moved to Petrograd, which was then the centre of anarchist activity and the home of Golos Truda (The Voice of Labour) and its publishing house, which reprinted the most important works of the anarchist theorists. Joining Golos Truda, Olga became the manager of its bookstore and met Gregory Maximoff, who became her lifelong companion.

After the Bolshevik seizure of power, anarchist activity in Petrograd became increasingly difficult, so the Golos Truda press was moved to Moscow. There Olga resumed her post while Maximoff devoted his energies to the newspaper. In March 1918, however, the Bolshevik capital was also transferred to Moscow. From the outset the Bolsheviks displayed an implacable intolerance of anyone who thought differently from themselves. All newspapers which did not lend unqualified support to the Bolshevik cause were shut down. Among them was Golos Truda, many of whose members - including Maximoff - were arrested, though Olga remained at liberty and continued to manage the bookstore, which for the moment was left undisturbed.

Before long a large number of anarchists had been locked up in Moscow's prisons. To assist them,

a Black Cross group was founded, in which Olga took an active part. In 1921 a number of imprisoned anarchists declared a hunger strike, which the Bolsheviks tried in vain to suppress. Olga, as the wife of an inmate, was allowed to visit the prison, and she did everything possible to spread the news of the strike. To avoid unfavourable repercussions among the foreign workers, Lenin finally decided to release some of the anarchists on condition that they leave the country. Thus, at the beginning of 1922, a group of Russian anarchists, including Gregory and Olga Maximoff, were able to leave their homeland and travel to Berlin, without a penny in their pockets or any knowledge of the German language. On no account did Olga wish to see Maximoff cease his literary activities - above all his work on Bakunin. But Germany too soon began to smell of totalitarianism, so the couple moved on to Paris - and yet another unfamiliar language. Finding no more contentment in Paris than they had found in Berlin, they at length emigrated to the United States and settled in Chicago.

By education Maximoff was an agronomist, and his friends in America advised him to learn English so as to acquire a position in his profession. Maximoff, however, lived with the hope that Russia would soon free itself from the Bolshevik regime, and he meanwhile learned the trade of paperhanger until he might leave America, which he found repugnant materialistic. After a hard day of physical labour he would throw himself into editing the journal Delo Truda (The Cause of Labour) and he also resumed his extensive work on Bakunin. Maximoff's exhausting labours combined with his dissatisfaction with America to undermine his health. In 1950 his heart finally gave out, and he died prematurely at the age of 56.

For Olga the death of her beloved companion was a terrible blow, but she managed to withstand it and to continue her work as a cashier for a large Chicago concern, and so was able to outlive her husband by almost a quarter-century. As before, she

remained active in all anarchist undertakings in Chicago. For anarchists, of course, Chicago is a place of pilgrimage. In the Forest Home (Waldheim) Cemetery is a special "Anarchists Corner" with the graves of such outstanding figures as Emma Goldman and the monument to the martyrs of November 11, 1887, which Olga would often visit and decorate with wreaths and flowers.

An avid reader, Olga followed world events and was well versed in great literature. She was a completely moral person without the slightest stain on her integrity. She never exploited anyone, never deceived anyone. Although she was active in gathering aid for needy anarchists, she herself strove to remain self-sufficient and seldom approached her friends for assistance, even in the most trying circumstances. She was a true bearer of the anarchist ideal, the embodiment of its fullest beauty.

On one of Chicago's frosty winter mornings Olga slipped on the ice that covered the city's streets. This is a common accident in the Windy City with its severe climate, but for Olga it had tragic consequences. She had to be taken to a hospital and to undergo a series of operations. For years afterwards she endured excruciating pain and for a time had to hop about on one foot. She lived alone and there was no one to help. She was saved only by the telephone, which she used to obtain the bare necessities of life. But eventually not even this device could help, as she became totally deaf. Death at last put an end to her suffering. Honour to her memory!

Boris Yelensky.

Note: Maximoff was also the author of Bolshevism, Promises and Reality, Constructive Anarchism (1952), and compiled The Guillotine at Work: Twenty Years of Terror in Russia (1940). All now out of print.

## IN BRIEF

Germaine Greer, former 'leader' and spokeswoman of Women's Lib, succeeded in having squatters evicted from her house in North Kensington, London. Ms. Greer is in Italy writing a book and is not expected back until next year. Who will liberate us from the curse of homelessness?

One of the hostages released from the Swedish bank robbery said "They [the robbers] were fine boys. They never set a finger on us" and told the police not to harm them. She denied she had been raped. A police doctor said the girls' ordeal was so terrifying that they were mentally rejecting the reality of what happened.

Anglia Television advertised an aerosol spray to give a non-stick surface to cooking utensils each time they are used.

In Colchester a soldier who, in the words of the Essex County Standard 'had an unhappy tour of duty in Northern Ireland', committed offences to get out of the Army. He appeared on 19 charges including two of taking vehicles, six of theft, and five of damage. He asked for a further 49 charges to be taken into consideration. He got 18 months and it was said his services were no longer required by the Army although a date had not been fixed for his release.



# LETTERS

## TACTICS FOR TODAY

Dear Comrades,

When I first read Tony Gibson's letter (FREEDOM 8.9.73), I felt very angry indeed. Then I felt sad.

If one writes controversial articles, one naturally expects to have one's views criticised - and I hope mine are! But one does not, however, expect to read such dishonest, scurrilous and downright vicious remarks in a paper like FREEDOM.

I do not, of course, intend to reply or comment upon any of them.

In my article ("British Anarchism - Tactics for Today") I suggested that if a healthy anarchist movement is to develop in this country, it may have to arise afresh, with different people, and possibly from a different social strata, than the present-day "movement". Sadly, I must confess that if many anarchists think and feel like Tony Gibson, I am right. I can't see such types of people helping to bring about a freer and better world. And I hope that's what we are after.

Yours fraternally,

Peter E. Newell

### Tactics for today 2

I FOUND much of interest in Peter Newell's pretentiously entitled piece "British Anarchism - Tactics for Today" (FREEDOM 1/9/73). Sadly the areas of most interest were short on specific details.

I took the main purpose of the article to be advocacy of the proposal "to build up an anarchist/libertarian organisation capable of taking the initiative away from the authoritarians". But I believe that even such an unexceptional proposal as this begs at least two questions. Firstly, what sort of anarchist/libertarian organisation is required? And secondly, to put my doubts as kindly as I may, I feel that Peter overestimates the role of an organisation in the revolutionary struggle. It would never surprise me to see any marxian/authoritarian organisation outmanoeuvre and outpolitic any anarchist/libertarian organisation, because such activities are an important part of the political practices of the authoritarian left, but they have no place in the anarchist movement. One of the strengths of the anarchist movement is that it does not engage in manoeuvres and deals for its sectional advantage

and it doesn't make political deals for its own organisational end. The anarchist movement has no sectional interests aside from those of the working class, nor any organisational end other than the overthrow of the capitalist system, the destruction of the state and the establishment of a free society. Furthermore, with regard to the efficacy of anarchist organisations, let it not be overlooked that on the one occasion in history when anarchism held a decisive initiative in a social revolution, it was the anarchist organisations, mainly CNT, which, in pursuit of apparent short term advantages, allowed the destruction of the Spanish revolution by its authoritarian enemies.

Until Peter can be a little more detailed as to the sort of anarchist organisation he favours I must doubt the usefulness of his proposals. I would certainly resist the suggestion that an anarchist organisation of itself has any merit.

Elsewhere in the article we read "Without libertarian organisation, counter revolution is, and has always been, inevitable". This is unexpanded and prompts the observation that in Spain, even with libertarian organisation, counter revolution was, if not inevitable, actual. Evidently what is needed, and has always been needed, is not only an anarchist/libertarian organisation.

Another feature of the article which certainly seemed strange to me was the long quotation from John Tyndall's speech to national front members. What Tyndall is trying to get over is what he believes to be the best method for National Front activists (and as Peter infers, it holds good for any authoritarian group) to manipulate people into working for the party/faction/organisation. Whatever differing forms anarchist activity may take I imagine most would agree that manipulation of supporters should be no part of it. So rather than take Tyndall's words as guidance for our own activity (and while Peter probably wouldn't, this part of his article can be interpreted thus) I feel we would do better to seek to use them to explain to any NF members or sympathisers we may meet how their leader is, on his own admission, using them to fight his battle.

It has become my view that the way the anarchist movement may best strengthen itself is for such sections of it as so wish to organise themselves as they find appropriate, be it in ORA or ASA or through Anarchist Black Cross or in area groups or

by publishing ventures or in industrial groups. The different ways of advancing the anarchist message and developing the solidarity of the revolutionary movement are infinite in number and not mutually exclusive. Any activity which extends people's understanding of human solidarity brings them closer to anarchism. And it is the extent of anarchist consciousness among the people, not the strength of anarchist organisations, that will be the safeguard against the counter revolution.

Harry Bickerstaff.

## BOXCAR BERTHA

The latest FREEDOM says that I and Sid Parker "demolish the myth" of Boxcar Bertha's radical views in the paper "Siren". Not so. In a letter to them Sid questioned her actual existence, not her views, from conversations he had with some old-timers; I understood she was, in fact, a real person, from my conversations with others.

A. Meltzer.

POSTAGE IS UP. We have to pay an extra 1p on every surface mail and 1p on every airmail copy of FREEDOM sent out. 10p from every inland and surface mail subscriber and 20p (50c) from airmail subscribers will save us this loss to the end of the year on existing subscriptions. (Even if you can't contribute to the Press Fund.)

**WE GO TO PRESS ON MONDAY  
LATEST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF  
MSS., LETTERS, MEETING NOTICES  
IS THE MONDAY IN EACH WEEK  
OF PUBLICATION.**

Angry Brigade echoes

Continued from Page 3

And, I ask him again, which of my remarks does he think were 'ill-timed and unnecessary'? My criticism of the invocation of 'anger' in 1971-72 was essential to my opposition to the whole style of politics favoured by the advocates of urban guerrilla techniques. I repeat, I never criticised those on trial, only the Angry Brigade for its actions and the various Defence Groups for their publications. What are the critics of my criticism really talking about? And what kind of anarchism are Rupert Williams, Nick Heath, and J.W. really calling for?

Harrow.

N.W.



# ROCKER

# CENTENARY CELEBRATION

THE CENTENARY of Rudolf Rocker's birth was celebrated at a very well attended meeting in Toynbee Hall, London E.1. last Sunday. The speakers included Joseph Leftwich, Sam Dreen, Bill Fishman, Colin Ward and Avraham Stencl (who spoke in Yiddish).

Both Joseph Leftwich and Sam Dreen knew Rocker during the period when he worked with the Jewish workers in the Whitechapel area. Just as Toynbee Hall was founded as a working class club, Rocker and his Jewish comrades founded the Jubilee Club. Joseph Leftwich recalled the period when thousands of Jewish immigrants came and settled in the East End. They came mostly without any trade and worked in the clothing and furniture trades which were just starting manufacturing on mass production lines. They worked under the most terrible conditions for very low wages and became the victims of the small master-tailors who were sub-contracting from the large firms. Each would underbid the other for this work and would reduce the wages and sack employees accordingly.

Jewish immigrants could not even turn to the British trade unions for help, since a TUC Congress had passed a resolution which although it referred to "foreign worker" was really aimed at the Jews, who they considered were injurious to the interests of the British worker. Although Rocker wasn't a Jew he worked to assist the forming of Jewish trade unions to combat these conditions. These finally proved successful in 1912 when, after a strike, the sweat shop system was abolished.

Rocker was editor of Arbeter Fraint and in January 1905 the first issue of Germinal came out, devoted to literature and contemporary thought.

Colin Ward, editor of Anarchy for ten years, spoke about the life of Rocker from his upbringing as a Catholic in Germany, his travels around Europe as a skilled bookbinder, his involvement with the social democrats and his subsequent conversion to anarchism. After Bismarck's anti-Socialist laws were enforced, Rocker went to Paris and then came on to London. He was interned in the First World War, firstly at the Olympia exhibition hall in London and then on the "Royal Edward", moored off Southend, and at Alexandra Palace. Colin's impression was that Rocker must have been a human dynamo, continually writing and editing two journals but also writing for other anarchist papers as well as his books, speaking at meetings, educating Jewish immigrants, and helping to form Unions and organise the strikes that took place.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1933 Rocker and his companion Milly Witcop got out of Germany with the manuscript of his book Nationalism and Culture and went to America. On a previous visit Rocker and Milly had been refused entry because they were not married. (Little has changed in that "Land of the Free". I was informed at the Centenary meeting that Tony Smyth, who has been working for the American Civil Liberties Union in New York, had just returned because Jean was refused permission in joining him there with their children.)

Colin Ward also spoke of Rocker's anarchist-communist views and that, like the comrades in Spain, he believed that such a society could be achieved by organising on anarcho-syndicalist lines. His book of that name was a concise exposition of this branch of anarchist thought and had been widely translated and reprinted.

Bill Fishman, who had organised the meeting, spoke of his researches into the Jewish anarchist movement in the East End.

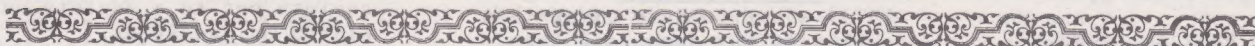
Sam Dreen talked about his meeting with Rocker when he was a boy of fifteen. His recollections were of a personal and sentimental nature and although Dreen left the anarchist movement and joined the Zionists, he obviously still continued to admire Rocker.

Like most celebrations, the speakers were only full of praise and admiration, and I felt that Rocker was looked up to far too much. Perhaps it has been the passing of the years that gives this impression, but it did seem that Rocker was looked upon as a leader rather than as another comrade who perhaps had a little more talent and energy than the next comrade. Only Colin Ward, for instance, mentioned Rocker's support for the Second World War, and said that he was the last of the anarchist sages. One also felt that many who attended had long ago departed from their anarchist views and had taken up a more conventional viewpoint. This was certainly reinforced by the attendance of the Borough's Lord Mayor seated in the front row wearing his chain of office and authority.

However, the celebration did also give us an opportunity to meet comrades one had not seen around recently. From the little gatherings over the tea and cakes it seemed many enjoyed this part of the celebration as much if not more than some of the speeches.

Peter Turner

NOTE: Rocker's essay Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism has just been re-issued as a pamphlet by Freedom Press (20p) with a critical foreword.





through the safe channels of Parliament than embark on a programme of industrial action. That is why they are still in favour of continuing the talks with the Government about Phase 3 of their wages policy. They say that they want to put the unions' point of view, when everyone knows the differences that exist and that there is little chance of an agreement.

The Government seem determined to continue their policy of expansion. The inflation and industrial boom must go on. This news has made the City, according to the Sunday Times, "wallow in gloom" because "there is too much money about". Obviously in any boom period, despite wage restrictions, expansion means more work and more pay for those employed. And with the present rate of inflation people are spending it as fast as they earn it.

But in any economic crisis the working class will be the people who will in the long run feel the pinch. It is the skills and hard work of this class who keep managements, shareholders and all those parasites who live off fat expense accounts while others sweat their guts out in some lousy factory. All those who moralise and call upon workers to work harder are so much dead weight which has to be carried. Anarchists want the working class to throw off this dead weight and all the oppressive forces of the State and its bureaucracy and build a society based on solidarity, mutual aid and brotherhood. The State and those who control the wealth of this country need the working class, but given a conscious desire for a free and just society with ordinary people in control of their own lives, the working class would not need them. As anarchists it is our task to plant that seed of revolt and propagate ideas for that free society.

P.T.

WEA classes in Central London. 1973-74 session includes lectures on History of Socialism and the Labour Movement (24 Sept.); Welfare Rights (27 Sept.); Adolescent Development and Problems (17 Sept.)\* Term starts 17 Sept. Full list and details from Classes Secretary: Sidney Billson, 33 Compton Road, London N.1. (\*this (first) lecture is at Prospect College, Sidmouth St., WC1 at 7 p.m.) DOUGLAS KEPPER, Walnut Cottage, Moorland, Bridgwater, Somerset thanks all who kindly donated and helped save the situation. Sincere and grateful appreciation. Published by Freedom Press, London, E. 1. Printed by Vineyard Press, Colchester.

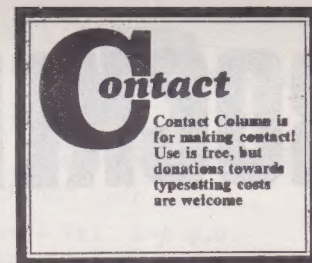
await those who pin their faith in states, nations and leaders.

Lord Lindsay of Birker recently wrote to The Times, "My wife and I recently spent a month in the People's Republic of China and we were impressed by the extent to which the authority of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao had inhibited any clear thinking about important social problems. Everyone was bitterly hostile to the Soviet Union but seemed incapable of understanding what had gone wrong in Soviet society. They also seemed incapable of appreciating the danger, which seemed obvious to us, that China might be reverting to the type of centralized, bureaucratic authoritarian society characteristic of every strong Chinese dynasty since the third century B.C."

"What happened in the Soviet Union," wrote Lord Lindsay, "was that the people very soon lost any power to control the Communist Party and that, under Stalin a new ruling and exploiting group developed which owed its power, not to private ownership of the means of production but to control of the apparatus of government. Similarly in traditional China the imperial bureaucracy was more powerful than any class of property owners." Lord Lindsay is an old friend of China, his wife is Chinese, he was a tutor at Peking University up to 1941 when he was imprisoned by the Japanese, he escaped and joined the Communist armies in the border regions of China. Therefore he writes more in sorrow than in anger and it is in sorrow that many of us have watched China's tortuous road away from the bright future of the people's revolution.

The same issue of The Times which carries Lord Lindsay's letter has an editorial 'A Serious Warning from China' which, based upon hearsay of senior officials talking to Roy Jenkins, develops Chou's thesis that the Soviet Union is a greater threat to Europe than to China. As anarchists we must abstain from backing favourites in the nuclear race, contenting ourselves with the observation that all nation-states are the enemies of all other nation-states.

However this Chinese-Russian quarrel is one of the fruits of Kissinger's Metternich-like diplomacy. Not only has China denounced Russia as 'imperialist' and comparable to Hitler but there have been touted in Western Europe plans for a 'preventitive' war by Russia against China. Only the credulous Daily Telegraph (9 August 1973) seems to have given them publicity but doubtless they exist in some staff officer's exercise books - along with



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dream-plans for the invasion of everywhere, including Czechoslovakia.

Pompidou's visit is foreseen in some quarters as an attempt to get China's support (and custom) for the Common Market as a bulwark against a U.S.-U.S.S.R. ganging-up. In a reply to Soviet criticism of dealings with President Nixon, Chou stressed that "necessary compromises between revolutionary countries and imperialist countries must be distinguished from collusion and compromise between Soviet revisionism and U.S. imperialism" Such double-talk is part of a tortuous road not to a free society but to a society enslaved by new-speak.

Jack Robinson